

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 /075 W
-----074471 171819Z /50

O R 171738Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5989
USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 03093

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG, ETRN
SUBJECT: PRESS LEAKS ON BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS:
NATIONALSTIFTUNG AND EXFILTRATION

REFS: (A) BONN 3012
(B) BONN 3043
(C) BONN 2935

SUMMARY: BONN'S "GENERAL ANZEIGER" TODAY REPORTED
RATHER FULLY ON THE BONN GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE FRG
PROPOSAL TO FIND A COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO LOCATING THE
NATIONALSTIFTUNG IN BERLIN (SEPTTEL). AT A BONN GROUP
MEETING CALLED TO DISCUSS THE ARTICLE, ALL FOUR REPS
EXPRESSED REGRET AT ITS PUBLICATION AND THE APPARENTLY
INTENTIONAL BRIEFING OF THE PRESS IN DETAIL, PRESUMABLY
BY SOMEONE FROM THE FRG. THE FRG REP (VON BRAUNMUEHL)
ADDED THAT THE LEAK (AS WELL AS THAT OF BONN GROUP
DISCUSSION OF FRG MEASURES TO CURB "MISUSE" OF THE
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TRANSITWAYS TO BERLIN) WAS PROBABLY AT THE INSTIGATION
OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG AND THOSE WHO
FAVOR FRG ACTION TO TAKE STEPS REGARDING EXFILTRATION.
BOTH THE FRG AND THE ALLIED EMBASSIES HERE ARE TAKING
THE LINE THAT FRG/ALLIED DISCUSSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.
VON BRAUNMUEHL SAYS THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE UNDERSTANDS
THE CHANCELLOR, IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTERS

MAIHOFFER AND GENSCHER, EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PROPOSED INTERIM SOLUTION REGARDING THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG BUT WAS PERSUADED TO CONTINUE ITS EXAMINATION. END SUMMARY

1. AT A BONN GROUP MEETING CALLED TODAY TO DISCUSS THE PRESS REPORTS IN THE GENERAL ANZEIGER (SEPTTEL) OF BONN GROUP DISCUSSION (REF A) OF THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG, THE US REP SAID THAT THE LEAK WAS REGRETTABLE, ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS IS THE THIRD SUCH PRESS LEAK OF MATTERS UNDER BONN GROUP DISCUSSION. THE OTHERS ARE THE BRUNET/ABRASIMOV DISCUSSION (REF C) AND EXFILTRATION ASSISTANCE (REF B). HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME LEAKS WERE INEVITABLE IN AN OPEN SOCIETY WHERE OFFICIALS WITHIN A GOVERNMENT WERE NOT OF ONE MIND ON A GIVEN ISSUE. HOWEVER, IT APPEARED IN THIS CASE THAT THE PRESS HAD BEEN RATHER FULLY INFORMED ABOUT THE RECENT DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG. SUCH LEAKS CANNOT BUT IMPEDE THE WORK OF THE BONN GROUP AND CAUSE ALL OF US, PERHAPS THE FOREIGN OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES MOST OF ALL SINCE THEY ARE SUBJECT TO GREATER EMBARRASSMENT IN VIEW OF THE LOCAL INTEREST, TO BE MORE GUARDED AND CIRCUMSPECT.

2. THE UK REP (EYERS) SUPPORTED THE REMARKS OF THE US REP AND ADDED TWO FURTHER POINTS. FIRST, HE SAID THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS LEAK HAS MANY OF THE MARKS OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO ASSOCIATE WITH A SEMI-FORMAL BRIEFING OF THE PRESS. SECOND, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO PLAY A PARTICULAR PART IN INTERNAL FRG POLITICAL DELIBERATIONS. IF THE ALLIES FIND THAT THEY ARE TO BE USED IN THIS WAY, THEY WILL NECESSARILY TEND TOWARD MAKING PREPARED STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN CLEARED IN ADVANCE WITH CAPITALS. THE BONN GROUP WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO SERVE ITS PURPOSE OF BEING A VEHICLE FOR "THINKING ALOUD" AND PERSONAL REFLECTION IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE A COMMON POSITION, AS WAS BEING DONE IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG. THE ALTERNATIVE WILL MOST PROBABLY BE, ON ANY GIVEN ISSUE, AN ALLIED POSITION APPROVED BY CAPITALS ON THE ONE SIDE AND AN FRG POSITION ON THE OTHER.

3. THE FRENCH REP (RICHARD) SAID THAT HE HAD SPENT ALL WEEK TRYING TO DEAL WITH RECENT LEAKS. REGARDING THE ALLEGED STATEMENT BY ABRASIMOV TO BRUNET THAT THE FRENCH SHOULD PREVAIL ON THE FRG TO PREVENT MISUSE OF

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USIE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 /075 W
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O R 171738Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5990
USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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THE TRANSITWAYS, HE CONFIRMED AGAIN THAT THIS WAS MADE
OF WHOLE CLOTH. HE SAID THE ONLY TIME HE COULD DISCOVER
THAT A SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS RAISED THE QUESTION OF
EXFILTRATION VIA THE TRANSITWAYS WITH A FRENCH AMBASSADOR
WAS IN 1973. SPEAKING OF THE LEAK ON THE NATIONALSTIF-
TUNG, HE SAID THAT THE APPARENT AUTHOR OF THE GENERAL
ANZEIGER ARTICLE (WOLF BELL) HAD CALLED HIM YESTERDAY FOR
CONFIRMATION OF MUCH OF THE ARTICLE. BELL SEEMED
WELL-INFORMED ABOUT THE BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND THE
BACKGROUND ON THE SUBJECT ALREADY. RICHARD MERELY TOLD
HIM THAT THE ALLIES HAD NOT YET BEEN TOLD WHAT THE
FINAL PROJECT IS TO BE AND THEREFORE HAD NOT TAKEN A
POSITION ON IT. RICHARD SAID BELL CLAIMED TO HAVE
PREVIOUSLY TALKED WITH VON BRAUNMUEHL AND THE BRITISH
EMBASSY. BOTH VON BRAUNMUEHL AND EYERS SAID THIS WAS
INCORRECT.

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4. VON BRAUNMUEHL DISTRIBUTED THE FOLLOWING PRESS STATEMENT WHICH WAS PREPARED FOR USE TODAY IF NEEDED (THE QUESTION APPARENTLY DID NOT ARISE) AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN BOELLING: "REPORTS IN TODAY'S PRESS, WHICH SPEAK OF ALLIED INTERVENTION AGAINST THE PROJECT OF A GERMAN NATIONALSTIFTUNG OR AGAINST CONSIDERATION OF AN INTERIM SOLUTION, ARE INCORRECT IN THIS FORM. WITH REGARD TO THE THOUGHTS ABOUT AN INTERIM SOLUTION, THE ALLIES HAVE UNTIL NOW BEEN INFORMED OF THIS PROVISIONALLY AND GENERALLY ON THE WORKING LEVEL IN THE BONN GROUP. THE CHARACTER OF THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE ALLIES IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL."

5. VON BRAUNMUEHL WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE REGRETS THE LEAK AND WILL TAKE THE ALLIED STATEMENTS SERIOUSLY. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNABLE TO TRACE THE ORIGIN OF THE LEAKS SINCE THERE ARE CONFLICTING INDICATIONS OF THE SOURCE, WITH THE GENERAL ANZEIGER HINTING THAT THE SOURCE MAY HAVE BEEN AN ALLIED ONE. OFF THE RECORD, HE SAID THAT AS A CIVIL SERVANT HE REGRETS IT WHEN RECORDS OF BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS ARE LEAKED. HOWEVER, POLITICIANS DO SO FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES AND THIS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN TOO DRAMATICALLY. HE SAID THAT WE SHOULD KNOW THAT THOSE WHO TAKE A HARD LINE IN FAVOR OF THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO ANY FRG STEPS TO CURB MISUSE OF THE TRANSITWAYS TO BERLIN ARE RATHER UNHAPPY WITH THE RECENT LEAKS SINCE THE SUGGESTION OF ALLIED CONCERNS WILL CAUSE THE PUBLIC TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ON BOTH COUNTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE PURPOSE OF THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG LEAK MAY BE TO BOLSTER THE POSITION OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE PLANS FOR SUCH AN

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ORGANIZATION.

6. VON BRAUNMUEHL SAID THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEAK OF THE BRUNET/ABRASIMOV CONVERSATION AND THAT STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL HAD TOLD THE BUNDESTAG FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THAT THIS LEAK WAS "EXTREMELY REGRETTABLE." VAN WELL SAID THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO SAY MORE BECAUSE HE REGARDS FRG/ALLIED CONSULTATIONS AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND THAT HE COULD ONLY HOPE THAT THE READINESS OF THE FRENCH SIDE TO KEEP THE FRG INFORMED WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. HE SAID THAT EVEN IF ABRASIMOV HAD MADE THE STATEMENT WHICH WAS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, AND HE COULD NEITHER CONFIRM OR DENY THIS, NOT TOO MUCH SHOULD BE MADE OF IT.

ABRASIMOV IS NOT ONLY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH THE ALLIES ON BERLIN BUT ALSO THE AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR AND HIS REMARKS MUST BE SEEN IN THAT LIGHT. THE LAST TIME THAT BREZHNEV SPOKE TO GENSCHER, HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE QA IS AN EXTRAORDINARY DOCUMENT. IN VIEW OF THIS, VAN WELL DISCOUNTED THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE PREPARING TO UNDO THE QA.

7. WITH REGARD TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CHANCELLOR'S DISCUSSION WITH GENSCHER AND MAIHOFFER YESTERDAY CONCERNING THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG, VON BRAUNMUEHL SAID THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD NO OFFICIAL WORD YET BUT UNDERSTOOD THE GENERAL ANZEIGER ARTICLE WAS LARGELY CORRECT. SCHMIDT HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PROPOSED INTERIM SOLUTION BUT AT THE URGING OF MAIHOFFER AND GENSCHER, HAD AGREED TO CONTINUE TO EXAMINE THE PROPOSED SOLUTION.

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O R 171738Z FEB 78
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8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE IS ALWAYS A DANGER OF A LEAK WHEN BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS, AS IN THIS CASE, TOUCH

ON CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS WITHIN THE FRG, THE NATIONAL-STIFTUNG STORY REFLECTS THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MONTHS THAT THE PRESS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TREATED TO SUCH A FULL ACCOUNT. SINCE THE PRESS STORY FOLLOWS THE CHANCELLOR'S MEETING WITH GENSCHER AND MAIHOFFER, WE STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT IT WAS DONE AT A HIGH LEVEL IN THE FRG.

9. AS AGREED WITH THE FRENCH AND BRITISH, ALL THREE EMBASSIES ARE TAKING THE LINE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS INQUIRIES THAT WE DO NOT COMMENT ON CONFIDENTIAL FRG/ALLIED DISCUSSIONS. THE THREE EMBASSIES ARE AGREED THAT TO GO BEYOND THAT (BY DENYING THAT THE ALLIES HAVE TAKEN A FINAL POSITION) WOULD INJECT THE ALLIES CONFIDENTIAL

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IN WHAT HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF A HIGH-LEVEL INTERNAL DOMESTIC FIGHT. IF THE CHANCELLOR, FOR EXAMPLE, IS CHOOSING TO USE REPORTS OF ALLIED DOUBTS IN ORDER TO FEND OFF THE ADVOCATES OF THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG OR SOMETHING COMPARABLE, IT IS NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ALLIED INTEREST TO CUT THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER HIM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, NEWS LEAKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN03093
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780074-0405
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780243/aaaabkit.tel
Line Count: 305
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 835e47d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BONN 3012, 78 BONN 3043, 78 BONN 2935
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3566227
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS LEAKS ON BONN GROUP DISCUSSIONS: NATIONALSTIFTUNG AND EXFILTRATION
TAGS: PGOV, ETRN, BQG
To: STATE USBERLIN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/835e47d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014